



PRESS RELEASE

European Union supports “Stronger Together” to promote social inclusion and economic opportunities for women survivors of violence in Timor-Leste

“Reforsa Hamutuk” – Stronger Together is the new EU funded project implemented by Hivos in collaboration with Fokupers and ACbit to strengthen NGOs and local communities and empower women victims of violence.

Dili, 28th January, 2020.

Mr Andrew Jacobs, Ambassador of the European Union to Timor-Leste, and implementing partners Hivos, Fokupers and ACbit launch today “Stronger Together” the new EU-funded initiative to promote social inclusion and economic opportunities for women survivors of violence in Timor-Leste.

The 30-month project financed through an EU contribution of 550,000 USD (500,000 EUR) will be implemented in seven Municipalities: Ainaro, Baucau, Dili, Ermera, Liquiça, Manufahi and Oecusse.

The project will provide 25,000 Timorese women who have been victims of violence with access to self-improvement opportunities. The initiative will also make available shelters, training, tools, and materials to 1,250 most vulnerable women to enable them to become economically productive and to take up employment opportunities.

The beneficiaries will be trained to run more profitable microenterprises in areas such as trading, agriculture, food processing, and the production of textiles, handicrafts and clothing, by improving the quality of their products. Important components of the project will be the establishment of a network to connect women with job opportunities in the local private sector for and the creation of learning groups to provide child care support.

“Economic inclusion is key in the empowerment of women, and it plays an important role in the reintegration in society of victims of violence. The European Union is very happy to support “Stronger Together” which will help to turn around the lives of thousands of Timorese women who have suffered domestic violence by giving them the tools to run successful micro-businesses and be financially independent. The European is proud to work through several different initiatives to support the work of civil society and the authorities in Timor-Leste to combat the scourge of violence against women and girls and to support its victims. I’m confident that “Reforsa Hamutuk” or “Stronger Together” will make a real difference, said Mr Andrew Jacobs, EU Ambassador to Timor-Leste.



Timor-Leste has some of the highest rates of violence against women of any country. Nearly 60% of ever-partnered women aged 15-49 have experienced sexual or physical violence from their partner or boyfriend¹. Women in Timor-Leste also suffer from the pre-independence legacy of violence. Survivors face challenges in relation to physical and mental health, social stigma and exclusion, and lack of access to economic resources.

For more information:

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About the Partners

Hivos is an international organisation that seeks new solutions to persistent global issues. With smart projects in the right places, we oppose discrimination, inequality, abuse of power and the unsustainable use of our planet's resources. Our primary focus is achieving structural change. This is why we cooperate with innovative businesses, citizens and their organisations. We share a dream with them of sustainable economies and inclusive societies.

Forum Komunikasaun Feto Timor Lorosa'e (the East Timorese Women's Communication Forum, Fokupers) is a human rights NGO with a particular focus on women's rights. It was established in 1997 to work with victims of rape and other forms of GBV during the Indonesian occupation. It currently provides services to victims and survivors of GBV and their families, including shelter, counselling, legal advice, court accompaniment and assistance with community re-integration.

Asosiasaun Chega! Ba Ita (the Enough! Association, ACbit) was founded in 2010 as a project of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) to act on the recommendations of the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) regarding human rights violations of the Indonesian occupation. ACbit works with victims and veterans of the occupation, providing assistance on transitional justice issues including rape, sexual exploitation and other forms of GBV.

¹ The Nabilan Health and Life Experiences Survey, The Asia Foundation and Australian Aid (<https://asiafoundation.org/wpcontent/uploads/2015/12/enq-FS1-2016-05-02.pdf>)